

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MANILA 11407 250954Z
ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T MANILA 11407

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MARR, MASS, MPOL, RP
SUBJECT: PHILIPPINE BASE ISSUES

REF: (A) STATE 171128; (B) STATE 168840

1. SUMMARY. CHARGE MET WITH DFA UNDERSECRETARY INGLES JULY 25 FOR PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION OF OPERATIONAL ISSUES RELATED TO MANAGEMENT OF THE BASES AS AUTHORIZED REFTELS. INGLES WITHHELD COMMENT ON PROPOSED US PROCEDURAL APPROACH, INCLUDING OUR DESIRE FOR DETAILED DISCUSSION OF ISSUES BY MUTUAL DEFENSE BOARD. INGLES PROMISED TO REPORT US PROPOSALS TO SECRETARY ROMULO, SEEK HIS INSTRUCTIONS AND PROVIDE RESPONSE TO US AFTER THE ASEAN SUMMIT IN KUALA LUMPUR. END SUMMARY.

2. CHARGE MET WITH DFA UNDERSECRETARY INGLES TO DISCUSS OPERATIONAL ISSUES RELATED TO MANAGEMENT OF THE MILITARY BASES AS AUTHORIZED REFTELS. DFA ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR LEGAL AFFAIRS, JOSE PLANA, AND AMEBASSY POL COUNSELOR, ROBERT WENZEL, WERE ALSO PRESENT.

3. CHARGE BEGAN BY REVIEWING BACKGROUND--HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH PRESIDENT MARCOS ON MAY 23 AND JUNE 20 AND WITH SECRETARIES ROMULO, INGLES, ET. AL, ON JUNE 7, DURING
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WHICH PHILIPPINE SIDE HAD PROPOSED CONTINUING, PRIVATE, INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS OF SUCH OPERATIONAL ISSUES AS PERIMETER SECURITY, SMUGGLING, WATERSHED AND LOGGING PROBLEMS, AND ALSO CUSTOMS AND IMMIGRATION ISSUES, AND UNAUTHORIZED FLIGHTS. THE PURPOSE OF SUCH INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS WOULD BE TWO-FOLD, TO IMPROVE US-RP COMMUNICATIONS ON THESE MATTERS AND TO SEEK PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS TO THESE OPERATIONAL ISSUES

WITH A VIEW TO EFFECTING IMPROVEMENT. CHARGE RECOUNTED THE VARIOUS MEASURES THE MISSION HAS TAKEN OVER THE PAST SEVERAL WEEKS IN AN EFFORT TO BE RESPONSIVE TO THE EXPRESSED GOP CONCERNS OF VARIOUS OPERATIONAL MATTERS. HE ALSO NOTED THE SUBSTANTIVE COORDINATION WHICH HAS BEEN TAKING PLACE ON THE US SIDE AND WHICH HAS NOW CULMINATED IN WASHINGTON'S AUTHORIZATION'S AUTHORIZATION TO PROCEED WITH THE ENVISAGED DISCUSSIONS.

4. CHARGE THEN PRESENTED SUBSTANCE OF INSTRUCTIONS, CAREFULLY FOLLOWING THE LANGUAGE OF REFTEL B (WHILE OMITTING ANY REFERENCE TO POSSIBLE HOLBROOKE CONVERSATIONS WITH MARCOS IN SEPTEMBER). CHARGE EMPHASIZED OUR DESIRE THAT, ONCE BROAD DISCUSSION OF THE ISSUES HAD TAKEN PLACE, MATTERS WOULD BE REFERRED TO MDB FOR DETAILED CONSIDERATION. HE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT, SINCE OUR CONSIDERATION OF PERIMETER SECURITY ISSUE WAS RELATIVELY ADVANCED, THIS WOULD BE AN IDEAL ISSUE FOR EXPEDITIOUS DISCUSSION IN THE MDB. CHARGE NOTED THAT THERE MIGHT BE OTHER ISSUES OF AN OPERATIONAL NATURE WHICH THE GOP MIGHT WISH TO PROPOSE FOR DISCUSSION. HE CONCLUDED BY RESTATING OUR VIEW OF THESE DISCUSSIONS AS PART OF A BROADER PROCESS TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS AND REMOVE FRICTIONS. WE WOULD CONTINUE TO WORK TO THAT END AND WOULD APPRECIATE GOP COUNSEL IN THIS REGARD. HE EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE FIRST MEETING, TO INCLUDE REPS FROM THE
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BASES, COULD BE HELD PROMPTLY TO RECEIVE GOP VIEWS, DISCUSS APPROPRIATE OPERATIONAL ISSUES AND FACILITATE THEIR REFERRAL TO THE MDB FOR DETAILED DELIBERATION.

5. INGLES WITHHELD ANY COMMENT ON THE PROCEDURAL APPROACH AS OUTLINED BY THE CHARGE, INCLUDING OUR EMPHASIS ON THE MDB ROLE. THE UNDERSECRETARY COMMENTED SIMPLY THAT HE WILL REPORT TODAY'S DISCUSSION TO SECRETARY ROMULO AND SEEK THE SECRETARY'S INSTRUCTIONS. HE WILL PROVIDE A RESPONSE BUT HE IS AFRAID THIS WILL NOT BE UNTIL AFTER THE ASEAN SUMMIT IN KUALA LUMPUR WHICH IS FULLY ENGAGING THE GOP'S ATTENTION AT THIS TIME. AT ONE POINT INGLES DID INQUIRE WHETHER WE HAD EXHAUSTED OUR DISCUSSION OF THE ISSUE OF CRIMINAL JURISDICTION. THE CHARGE RESPONDED THAT, WHILE WE WOULD CONTINUE OUR EFFORTS TO REFINE AND IMPROVE PROCEDURAL DETAILS, HE WAS NOT AUTHORIZED TO NEGOTIATE THE BASIC PROCEDURES WHICH ARE SET FORTH IN THE MILITARY BASES AGREEMENT. HANDLING OF SUCH BROADER ISSUES WOULD HAVE TO BE THROUGH SEPARATE DISCUSSIONS.

6. DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO MILITARY ADDRESSEES
REFTEL B.

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